Early Music Series

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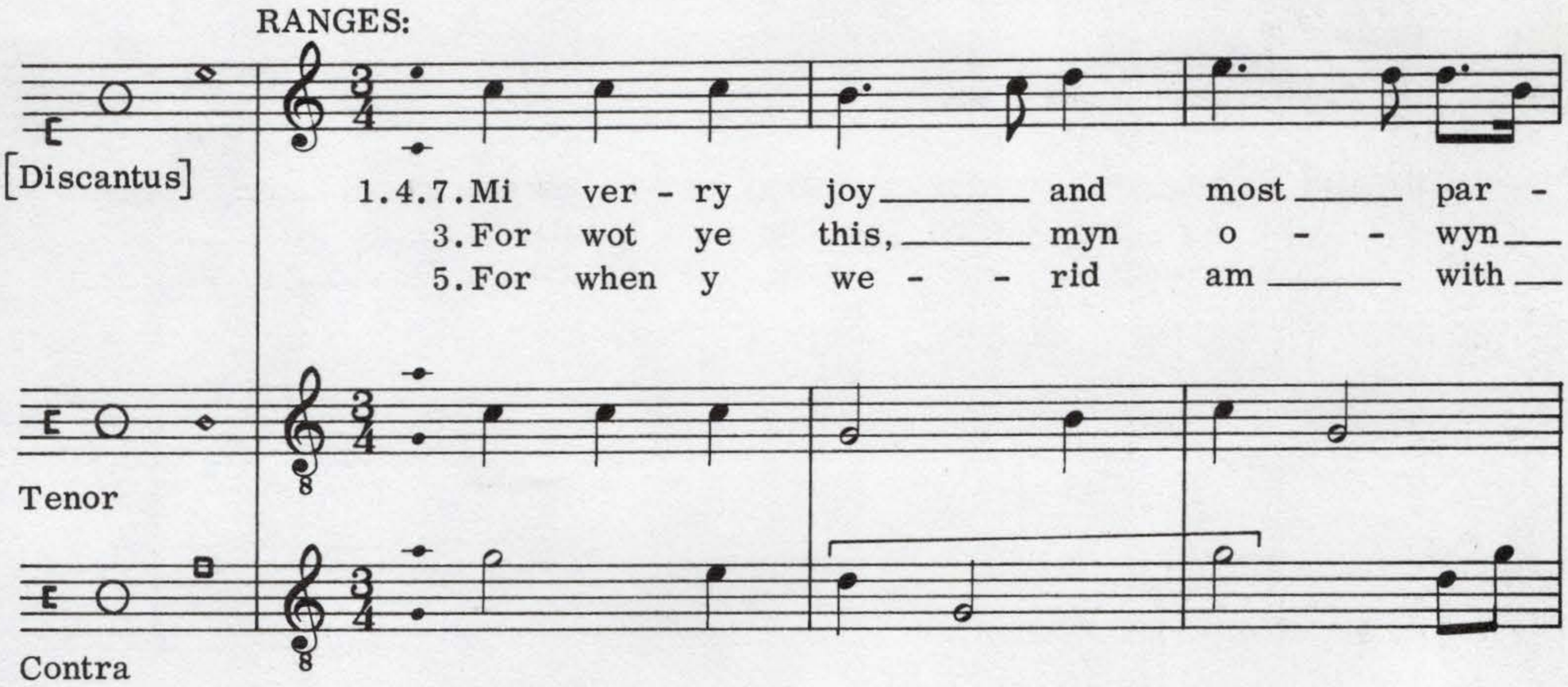
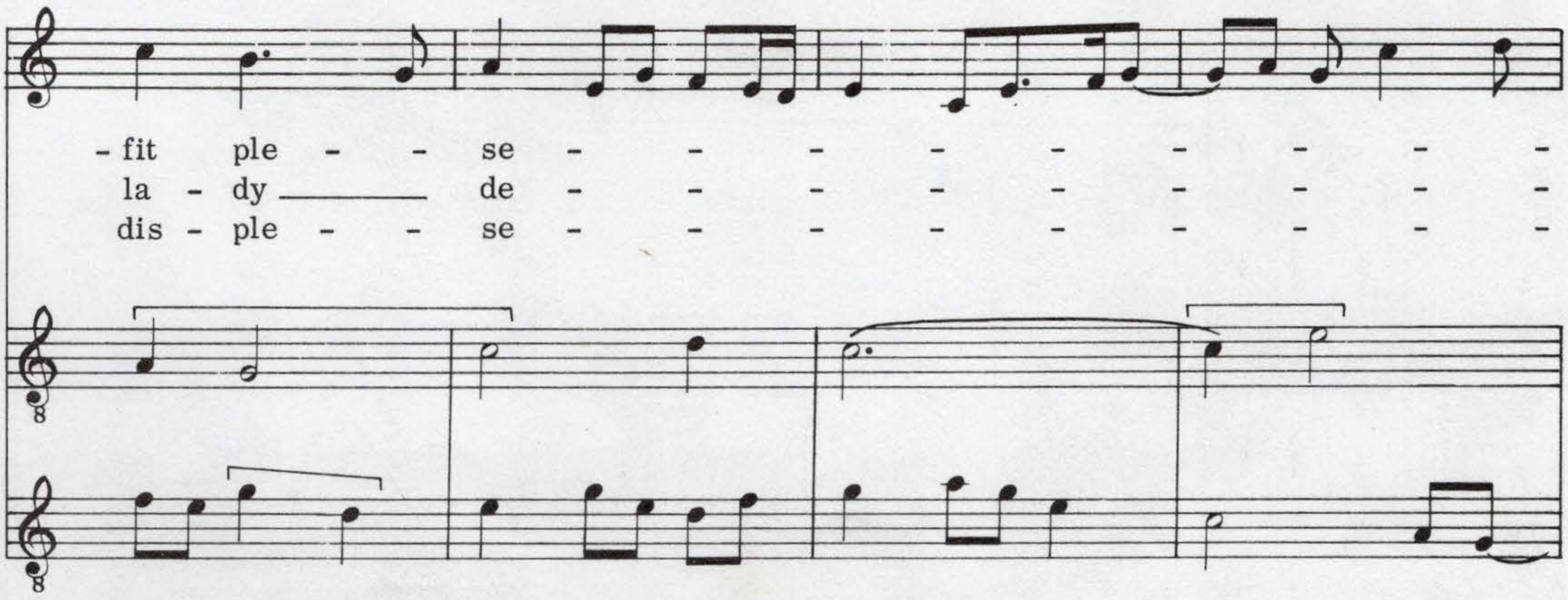
EM 28
(3 Part)

TWO MID-FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH SONGS

Edited by
David Fallows

1. Mi verry joy

Poem by Charles d'Orléans
Music by John Bedyngham



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2

8

– – – – re, Whiche are of me ___ and ___
– – – – re, That with – out yow ___ nave ___
– – – – re, Whos po – wer oft ___ hath ___

12

___ alle ___ y ___ have may – stres, ___
___ y ___ good nor glad – nes, ___
___ brought ___ me in dis – tres, ___

16

2.8. So wil – lith me to ___ se yow, lo ___
6. Me to re – quere to ___ com – fort more ___

20

— dowt - les, That half — how— moche — y —

— or lesse Nis ther — save— hope — as —

24

kan — not — say — yow he - - - - - -

sone — to — se — yow he - - - - - -

28

- - - - - - - - - - re.

- - - - - - - - - - re.

2. Pryncesse of youthe

Poem by John Lydgate

RANGES:

[Discantus]

Pryn - cesse of youthe and floure of gen - - tyl -
Of boun-tee roo - te, qween and ek _____ mays-

Tenor

Pryn - cesse of youthe and flou -
Of boun-tee roo - te, qween

Contratenor

4

- - es - - - - - - se, _____ En-saumple of
- - tres - - - - - - se _____ To al - le

- re of gen-tyl - es - - - - - se, En-saumple of ver-tu,
and ___ ek mays-tres - - - - - se To al - le wym-men,

9

ver - tu, grounde of cour-tey-sye, _____
wym-men, how they shal hem guye, _____

grounde of cour-tey - sye, _____
how they shal hem guye, _____

14

18

23

The sothe-fast my- rour, good t'ex - em - - ply - - -

The sothe-fast my- rour, good

27

- - - - fye, The right way to the port of wom-man-

t'ex - em - ply - fye, The right way to the

31

- hed: What I shal sey, of

port of wom - man - hed: What I shal sey, of

35

mer - cy take the heed.

mer - - - cy take the heed.

39

44

Texts

Mon seul plaisir, ma doulce joye,
La maistresse de mon espoir,
J'ay tel desir de vous veoir
Que dire ne le vous saroie.

Helas, pansés que ne pourroye
Nesung bien sans vous recevoir,
Mon seul plaisir, ma doulce joye,
La maistresse de mon espoir.

Car quant desplaisir me guerroye
Souventes foiz de son povoir,
Et je vueil reconfort avoir,
Esperance vers vous m'envoye.

Mon seul plaisir, ma doulce joye,
La maistresse de mon espoir,
J'ay tel desir de vous veoir
Que dire ne le vous saroie.

Mi verry joy and most parfit plesere,
Whiche are of me and alle y have maystres,
So willith me to se yow, lo dowtles,
That half how moche y kan not say yow here.

For wot ye this, myn owyn lady dere,
That without yow nave y good nor gladnes,
Mi verry joy and most parfit plesere,
Whiche are of me and alle y have maystres.

For when y werid am with displesere,
Whos power oft hath brought me in distres,
Me to requere to comfort more or lesse
Nis ther save hope as sone to se yow here.

Mi verry joy and most parfit plesere,
Whiche are of me and alle y have maystres,
So willith me to se yow, lo dowtles,
That half how moche y kan not say yow here.

Pryncesse of youthe and floure of gentylesse,
Ensaumple of vertu, grounde of courteysye,
Of bountee roote, qween and ek maystresse
To alle wymmen, howe they shal hem guye,
The sothefast myrour, good t'exemplyfye,
The right way to the porte of wommanhed:
What I shal sey, of mercy take the heed.

Beseching first unto youre hye noblesse
With qwakyng hert, of myn unware drede,
Of grace and pitee and not of rightwysnesse,
Of verray routhe to helpen in this neede;
This is to say, o welle of goodelyheed,
That I ne rechche thoughe ye do me dye
So you list firste to here what I seye.

Editorial Note

The music for *Mi verry joy* appears with the French rondeau text *Mon seul plaisir* in a total of fourteen manuscripts, the four earliest of which date from the 1460s. It is ascribed to Dufay in one source, but scholars have agreed with Besseler in putting more trust in the ascription to Bedyngham in Oporto, Biblioteca pública municipal, MS 714. It has been edited by Heinrich Besseler as an *opus dubium* of Dufay in *Guillelmi Dufay: Cantiones* (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, I/6, 1964), no. 90, where there is a detailed listing of the sources -- to which must be added only the recently discovered fragment, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. Ms. 9659, fol. 4^{r}, containing the Contratenor and half of the Tenor. The present edition of the music is based on the readings in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS f. fr. 15123, fols. 69^{v}-70^{r}, with certain errors corrected on the basis of concordant sources: in bar 13 the D in the Ct. reads C in the MS; in bar 17 the last quaver in Ct. reads C in the MS; in bar 30 the crotchet C is replaced by two quavers: BC in the MS.

Since the poem *Mon seul plaisir* is by Charles d'Orléans, it seems only reasonable to substitute the fifteenth-century English version of that same poem in the British Library Reference Division, MS Harley 682, fol. 67^{v}. Several scholars consider the English versions it contains to be by Charles himself, and some even believe that in several cases the English was written first; there is, moreover, reason to suspect that the music may originally have been written by its English composer for the English poem, and that only the scarcity of sources for English song in the middle years of the fifteenth century deprive us of a version of the music with English text to support that hypothesis.

The music of *Pryncesse of youthe* appears uniquely in El Escorial, Biblioteca del monasterio, MS IV. a. 24, fols. 114^{v}-116^{r}. The manuscript was prepared in Italy, perhaps near Naples, some time in the 1460s. The scribe had little apparent knowledge of English and thus gave the song no other text but the garbled opening 'Princhesse af youth and floree of godlihede, Che per fight meror of alt gentilnesse'. As such the song was first published by Manfred Bukofzer, 'The First English Chanson on the Continent', *Music & Letters,* xix (1938), pp. 119-131, on pp. 121-2; it is also edited in the dissertations on the Escorial manuscript by Brigitte Trautmann Kultzen (Hamburg, 1956) and Martha Kight Hanen (Chicago, 1973).

Of the many sources for John Lydgate's poem *The Temple of Glas* (*c.* 1420), which is edited complete by J. Schick (Early English Text Society, Extra Series, no. lx, 1891), this edition follows that in the British Library Reference Division, MS Add. 16165, a volume copied by John Shirley in about 1450: the poem *Pryncesse of youthe* (lines 970ff in Schick's edition) appears on fol. 224^{r} with the marginal note 'Balade of the lover'. Only two of the poem's ten stanzas are printed here.

For both songs this is the first edition to unite the music and the poem: the editions should not necessarily be thought of as definitive, but some of the considerations to which they give rise are discussed in David Fallows, 'Words and Music in Two English Songs of the Mid-Fifteenth Century', *Early Music,* January 1977. Accidentals printed small are editorial.

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David Fallows, 1976

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